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ABSTRACT

Northern Arizona University's Arizona Career Ladder Research & Evaluation Project for teachers implements a procedure for rewarding teachers based on performance levels rather than on years of teaching experience and college credits. Research data is collected each spring, analyzed and fed back to the districts for improvement of key program components. This document reports on the results of a qualitative analysis of an open-ended questionnaire administered to career ladder program participants. Respondents expressed their feelings in their own words on four questions: (1) Describe the major strength(s) of your district career ladder program; (2) Describe the area(s) of your career ladder program which need improvement; (3) Describe the area(s) of your district's organizational climate which show the greatest strength and those that need improvement; and (4) Describe the area(s) of your school's organizational climate which show the greatest strength and those that need improvement. Data from the results are presented in the form of pie graphs, bar graphs, and listings of categories of perceived program strengths and weaknesses. Each category is briefly defined by statements derived from participant responses, and shown in priority order by proportional representation. (JD)

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QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS & RESULTS FOR THE 1987 DATA CYCLE BY CAREER LADDER PROGRAM STRENGTHS & IMPROVEMENT AREAS

by

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Research Document presented to the

Joint Legislative Committee on Career Ladder Programs

Arizona State Capitol, House Wing

November 10, 1987

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QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR THE 1987 DATA CYCLE:

Career Ladder Program Strengths & Improvement Areas

Dr. Richard D. Packard, Project Manager

OVERVIEW

One of the research methodologies utilized by the Arizona Career Ladder Research & Evaluation Project is often referred to as qualitative in nature. With this type of research there is no preconceived notion as to the response outcomes; there are no assumptions or hypotheses which define predetermined concepts about what is being studied. Data is collected and categorized based on what respondents state, using their own words, and not on what the researcher has defined as the important concepts to evaluate. Data is derived by individual responses which produce "grounded theory," rather than researchers coming into the study with preconceptions or theory.

The subjects of the study determine what is important, or what is the "correct answer." The researchers analyze all respondents' statements which are then categorized and quantified based on their similarities. As a result of the analysis of all the responses, different categorized statements occur in various percentages adding up to 100% of the available information. This approach has provided a wealth of information for project research and evaluation.

COLLECTION, ANALYSIS & PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Collection of Qualitative Data

For the collection of qualitative data, four "open-ended" questions were provided, eliciting responses which were not of a "forced choice" nature. Respondents were able to express their own feelings in their own words, without being guided by a standard questionnaire with structured items. The four open-ended questions were as follows: (1) "Please describe the major strength(s) of your district career ladder program," (2) "Please describe the area(s) of your career ladder program which need improvement," (3) "Please describe the area(s) of your District's Organizational Climate which show the greatest strength and those areas which need improvement," and (4) "Please describe the area(s) of your School's Organizational Climate which show the greatest strength and those areas which need improvement."

All responses from these extensive sets of data were entered into a computer for each of the four open-ended items. The respondents' statements were then printed out and analyzed. As stated above, analysis was accomplished by placing each response type into a concept category which demonstrated an observable association with others.

The following presents qualitative data results in the form of pie graphs, bar graphs and listings of categories of perceived program strengths and weaknesses. Each category is briefly defined by statements derived from participant responses, and shown in priority order by proportional representation.

Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Data

Data Analysis and Presentation. The pie graphs shown in Exhibit A, Figure 1 (p. 7) depict the composite percentage distribution of teacher perceptions of career ladder program strengths and improvement needs areas, based on collapsed qualitative data from open-ended questions for seven phase 1 school districts.

Data Description. In regard to career ladder program concepts, there were 1,094 total responses for the area of strengths and 1,327 for the area of "needs improvement." Descriptions of categories in Exhibit A, Figure 1 are shown by a listing and concise definition of composite perceptions of strengths and improvement needs areas in career ladder programs by proportion and in priority order, as follows:

A. Career Ladder Program Strengths

1. 34% - Incentives: Higher pay than the traditional schedule; encourages quality teachers to keep up good work.
2. 13% - Information: Recognizes and defines specific skills; clear objectives; good inservice training; specific guidelines to follow when developing portfolio.
3. 13% - Evaluation: Evaluation system is very clear; well trained evaluators; good peer evaluators; good evaluation instrument.
4. 10% - Structure: CLP well written and organized; CLP is criterion referenced; teaming/mentoring; consistency of career ladder committee.
5. 08% - Accountability: Teachers are held accountable; requires teachers to remain involved in all aspects of education; made teachers aware of their profession.
6. 06% - Teacher Involvement: Teacher input; teachers involved in planning; created by teachers; teacher input to creation and change.
7. 06% - Diversities: Willingness to listen; anyone can apply; Essential Elements of instruction; fast-tracking.
8. 05% - Professionalism: Has raised level of professionalism; encouragement of professional growth; personal satisfaction in job.
9. 05% - In-class: Does not encourage good teachers to leave the classroom; focus on teacher performance in classroom; advance and credit for what you do in your classroom.

B. Career ladder program improvement areas

1. 28% - Evaluation and Placement: Need a uniform method of evaluating Career Ladder Assessment instrument; evaluation by one person; more evaluations; vertical movement on ladder unfair.
2. 21% - Information: Provide greater assistance for new teachers; better information to participants; clearly stated goals; consistent communication of what is expected.
3. 17% - Time: Too much time in documentation; too much paper work which takes away

from teaching; rewards for time spent outside of classroom.

4. 09% - Money: Needs much more money; little reward for lot of effort; more money equitably shared; the method of awarding money.
5. 08% - Special Area Teachers: The specialist teacher is graded on the same standard as the classroom teacher; need a plan for special education, resource personnel; no program for counselors; different evaluation for non-classroom personnel.
6. 07% - Diversities: Placement depends on how well you write; peer relationships; Teaching Edge is too heavily pushed; too political; slanted toward elementary.
7. 05% - CLP Components: Better training for mentors; more flexibility concerning type and amount of material for portfolio; better guidelines for mentors.
8. 05% - Attitude and Stress: Employee morale; stress level is too high; greed; stress related to amount of paper work; doesn't allow closeness with co-workers.

Data Analysis & Presentation. The bar graphs shown in Exhibit A, Figure 2 (pp. 8-13) depict the composite percentage distribution of teacher perceptions of career ladder program strengths and improvement areas, based on qualitative data from open-ended questions for each of seven phase I school districts.

Data Analysis and Presentation. The pie graphs shown in Exhibit B, Figure 3 (p. 14) depict the percentage distribution of teacher perceptions of strengths and weaknesses in district organizational climate, based on collapsed qualitative data from open-ended questions for each of seven phase I school districts.

Data Description. In regard to district organizational climate, there were 654 total responses for the area of strengths and 437 responses relatred to weaknesses. Descriptions of categories in Exhibit B, Figure 3 are shown by a listing and concise definitions of teacher perceptions of strengths and weaknesses in district organizational climate by proportion and in priority order, as follows:

A. Strengths in District Organizational Climate

1. 17% - Diversities: Positive tone; people on committees have remained consistent; tryes not to pressure; good work environment.
2. 14% - Communication: Open communications; communication between teachers is good; administration is willing to go over concerns and questions.
3. 13% - Leadership: Strong leadership from administration; an administrator who believes in the program; principal is approachable and helpful.
4. 11% - Valuing of Personnel: High regard for teachers/staff; shows each teacher is cared about; emotional support is felt; district support of teachers as professionals.
5. 10% - Quality of Teachers and Teaching: Dedication to student; provides quality services; commitment to excellence; quality of personnel.

6. 10% - Information: Opportunity for inservices; best teacher training; resources available; opportunities for professional growth.

7. 10% - Autonomy and Innovation: Support for innovation and change; open to teacher's creativity; teachers have a voice in teaching styles; don't interfere with how you teach.

8. 08% - Goals and Objectives: All goals are clearly defined; well written objectives for each grade level; clearly stated objectives, I know what is expected.

9. 07% - Interpersonal Relationships: Small town environment; closeness of teachers; camaraderie among teachers; a feeling of family; a sense of belonging.

B. Weaknesses in District Organizational Climate

1. 27% - Communication: Communication of expectations unclear; District Office needs to communicate more with teachers; requests for data have been ignored.

2. 20% - Career Ladder: Evaluation is very clinical; need a team of evaluators, not just principal; monies not available to true "career teachers"; career ladder has not been well-organized; lack of option in choosing to participate in career ladder.

3. 16% - Diversities: Too concerned with community image; becoming too bureaucratic; not enough consistency from building to building; need adequate training before implementation of ; new programs; too much teacher/staff turnover.

4. 11% - Morale/stress: Competition instead of cooperation will ensue; morale is undermined, not improved; reduce stress.

5. 09% - Leadership: Administrators are aloof; a weak administrator; district people do not seem to be available for help; board needs to be more willing to listen.

6. 07% - Valuing of Personnel: Teachers do not receive recognition; lack of support for teachers; need more trust in teachers; do not feel appreciated.

7. 06% - Goals/Objectives: Lack of reality in goals and objectives; not knowing what special teachers need to do; implementation of programs and procedures.

8. 05% - Money: More work for the same pay; below standard salaries for area; lowest paid teachers in the city; pay scale needs improvement.

Data Analysis and Presentation. The bar graphs shown in Exhibit B, Figure 4 (pp. 15-20) depict the percentage distribution of teacher perceptions of strengths and weaknesses related to organizational climate, based on qualitative data from open-ended questions for each of seven phase I school districts.

Data Analysis and Presentation. The pie graphs shown in Exhibit C, Figure 5 (p. 21) depict the percentage distribution of teacher perceptions of strengths and weaknesses related to organizational climate in individual school units, based on collapsed qualitative data from open-ended questions for seven phase I school districts.

Data Description. In regard to school organizational climate, there were 485 responses in the area of strengths

and 611 related to weaknesses. Descriptions of categories in Exhibit C, Figure 5 are shown by a concise listing and definition of teacher perceptions of strengths and weaknesses related to organizational climate in individual school units, by proportion and in priority order, as follows:

A. Strengths in school unit organizational climate

1. 28% - Interpersonal Relationships: Strong support for each other; a feeling of family; great people to work with; cooperation among teachers.
2. 22% - Leadership: Principal's efforts to remain unbiased; administrator who believes in the program; strong leadership; principal is excellent.
3. 13% - Diversities: Competent staff involved in evaluations; discipline; feeling of being successful; concerned attitude; team teaching.
4. 12% - Communication: teacher input and decision making; very clear what is expected of me; good communications between staff; positive feedback; rapport.
5. 11% - Quality of Teachers and Teaching: Dedicated teachers; high quality of teachers; hard working staff; excellent programs; level of dedication is exceptional.
6. 08% - Valuing of Personnel: Administrative support is excellent; making each individual feel important; caring attitude towards teachers.
7. 04% - Goals and Objectives: Well organized and defined; work has clear purpose; clearly stated objectives; state specific goals in booklet.
8. 02% - Autonomy and Innovation: Autonomy in classrooms; teachers allowed to teach as professionals; given freedom in techniques; open to new ideas.

B. Weaknesses in school unit organizational climate

1. 26% - Communication: Need knowledge of progress; more sharing of ideas; more communication with special teachers; need more feedback.
2. 20% - Time: More teacher-teacher time; too much to do with more being added; excess of paper work; eliminate busy work; too many non-teaching jobs.
3. 20% - Career Ladder: More guidelines on Career Ladder Assessment Instrument; too much time, energy and stress for qualifying; broader data base; CLP has divided teachers.
4. 16% - Diversities: Stronger teaming groups; excellent discipline program; too many meetings-never start on time; direct services rather than consultative for children.
5. 09% - Leadership: Lack of consistency in administration; top-heavy administration; not enough strong leadership; leadership models lacking.
6. 04% - Goals and Objectives: Non-specific guidelines; academic expectations could be improved; no complete school goals.
7. 04% - Valuing Personnel: Lack of support for teachers; lack of respect for teachers;

more encouragement; lack of trust; more positive reinforcement.

Data Analysis and Presentation. The bar graphs shown in Exhibit C, Figure 6 (pp. 22-27) depict the percentage distribution of teacher perceptions of strengths and weaknesses related to organizational climate in individual school units, based on qualitative data from open-ended questions for each of seven phase I school districts.

Evaluative Summary & Implications. The figures, lists and graphs for the qualitative analysis, depict areas of program strengths and weaknesses. Some categories of strengths in some districts are emerging as weaknesses in others. The following are examples of categories which are appearing as strengths in some districts and weaknesses in others: (1) Information & Communication, (2) Incentives, (3) Evaluation & Placement, (4) Career Ladder Structure & Components, (6) Goals/Objectives, and (5) Valuing Personnel. Independent areas appearing as strengths include, (1) Teacher involvement, (2) Accountability, (3) Professionalism, (4) Interpersonal Relationships, (5) Leadership, (6) Program Quality, (7) Autonomy and Innovation. Independent areas appearing as weaknesses include, (1) Time requirements, (2) Attitude, Morale & Stress.

Implications are that districts who are experiencing weaknesses in specific areas may well be advised to seek assistance from those showing strengths in the same categories. The career ladder pilot test program allows for this kind of opportunity for development.

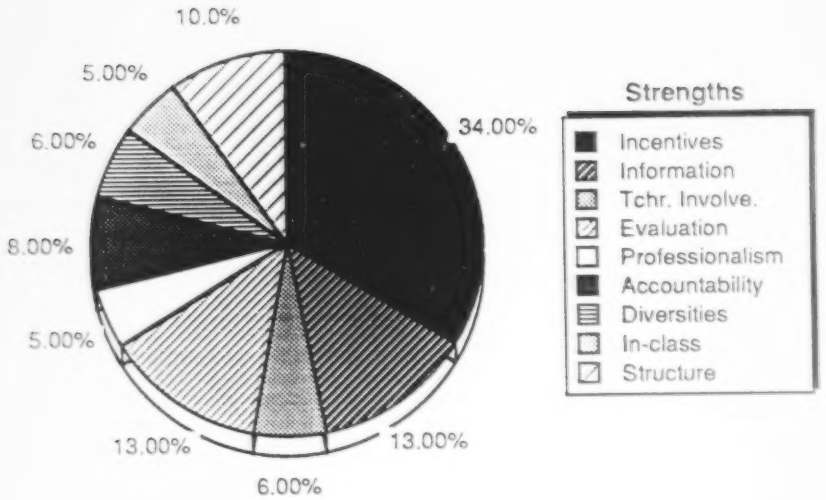


EXHIBIT A

FIGURE 1

Composite Percentage Distribution of Teacher Perceptions of Career Ladder Program Strengths and Weaknesses

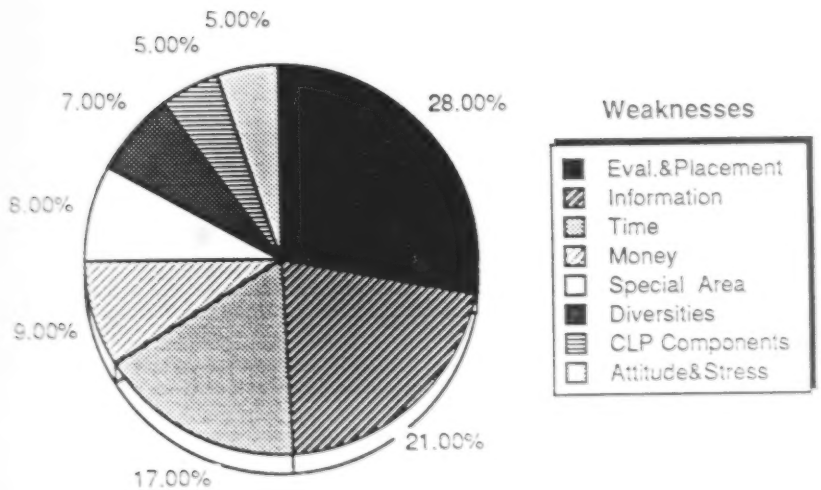
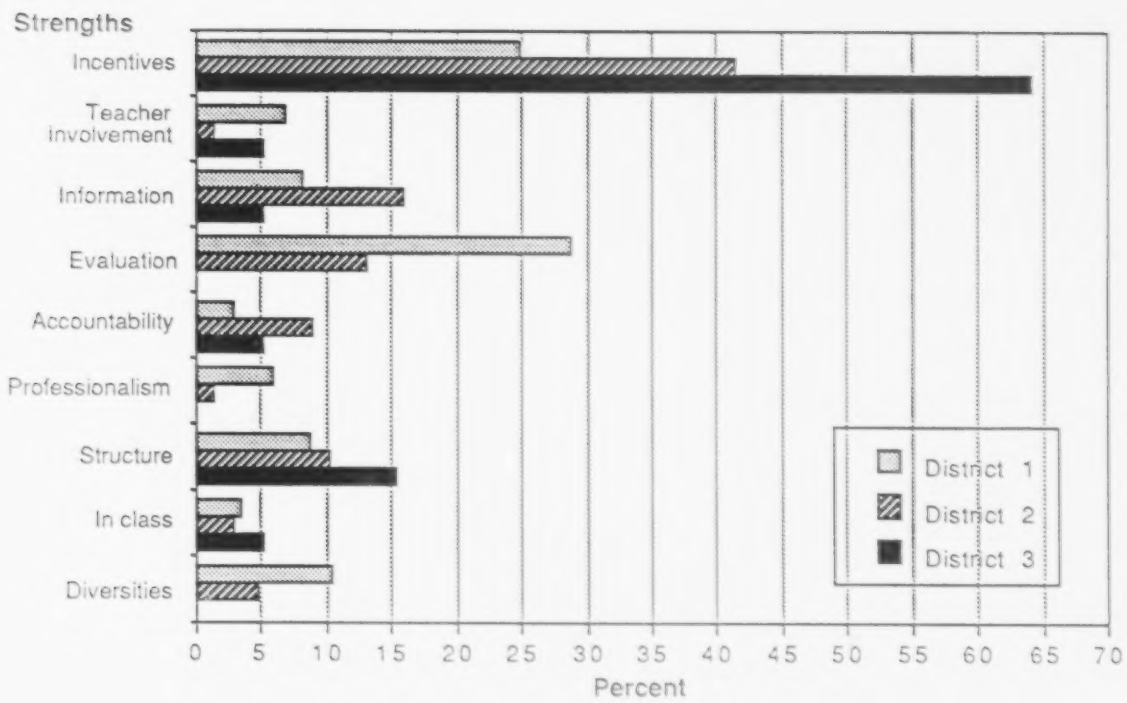


FIGURE 2

Composite Percentage Distribution of Teacher Perceptions of
Career Ladder Program Strengths and Weaknesses
by District



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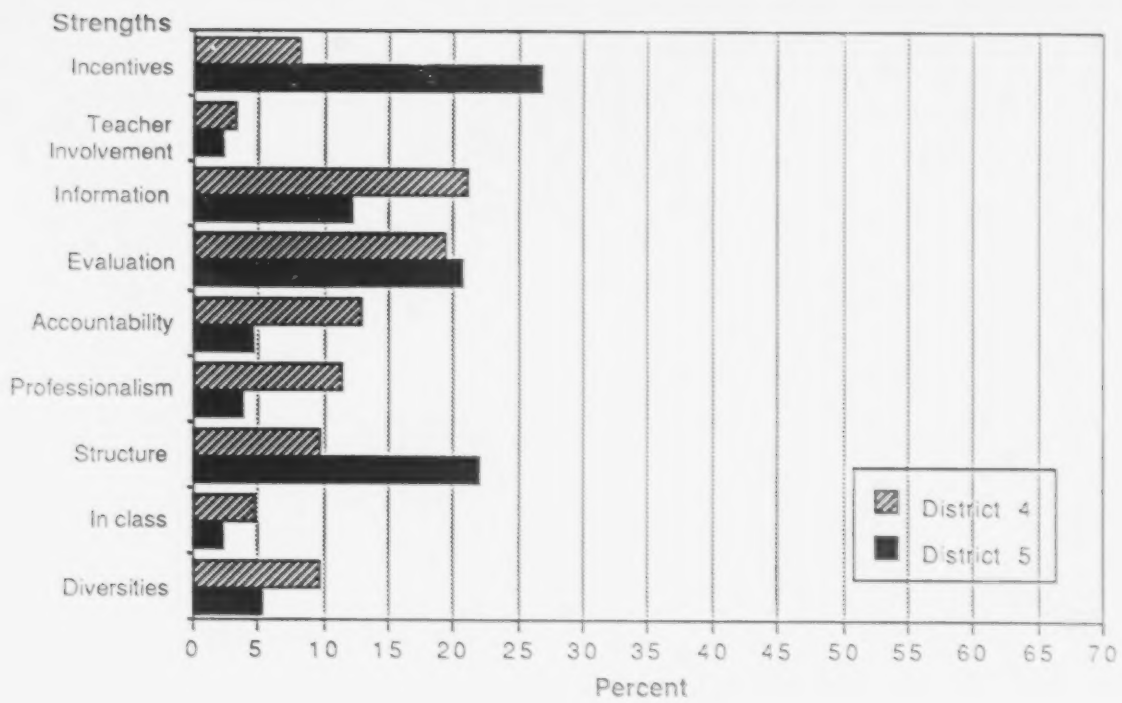

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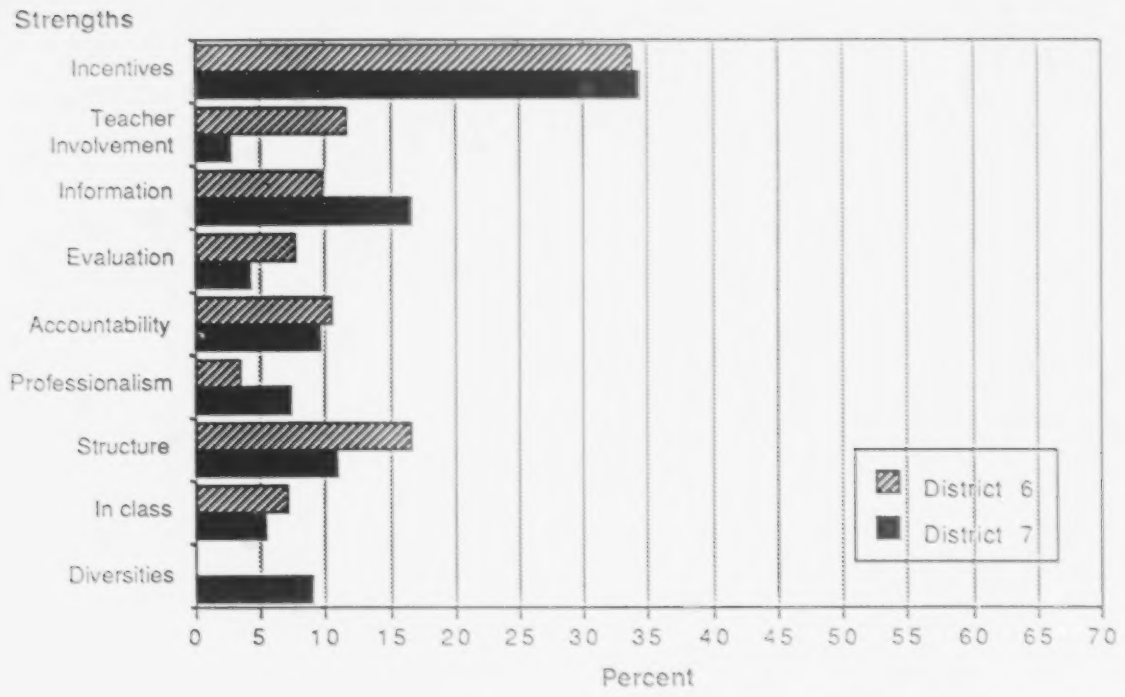

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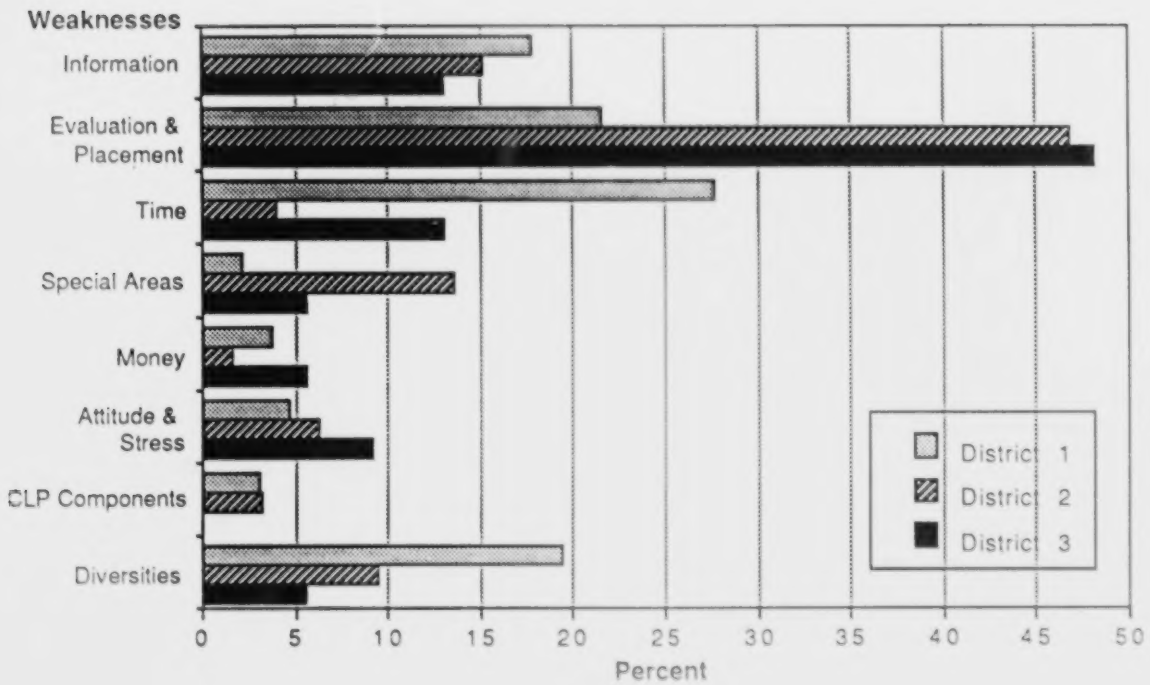

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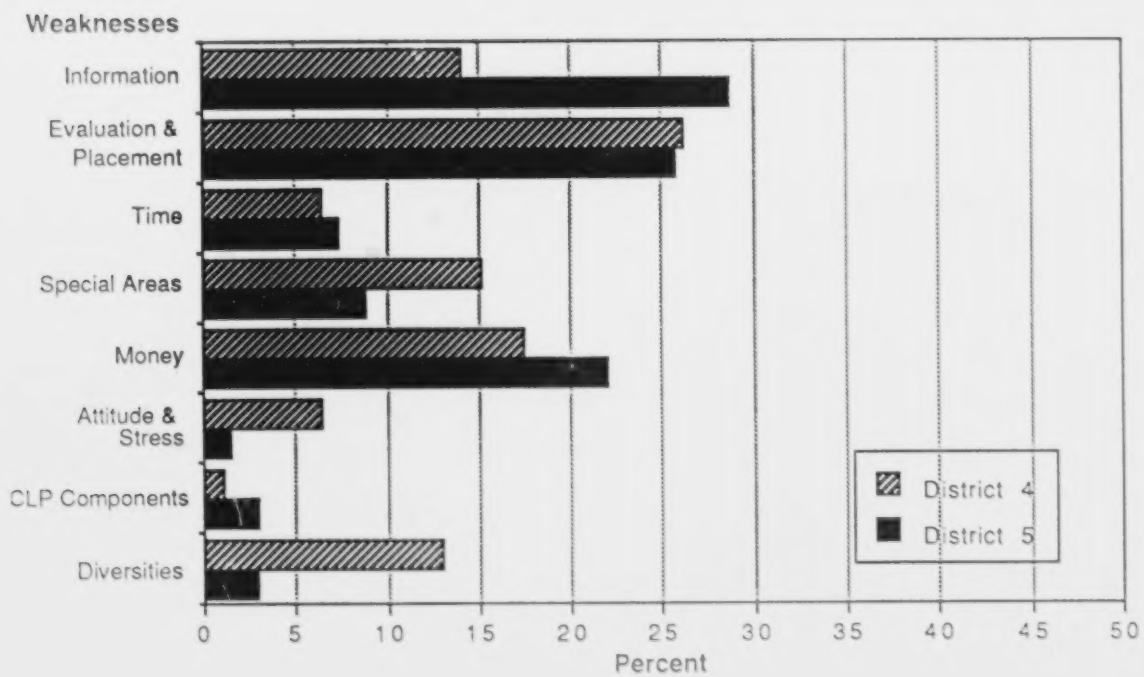

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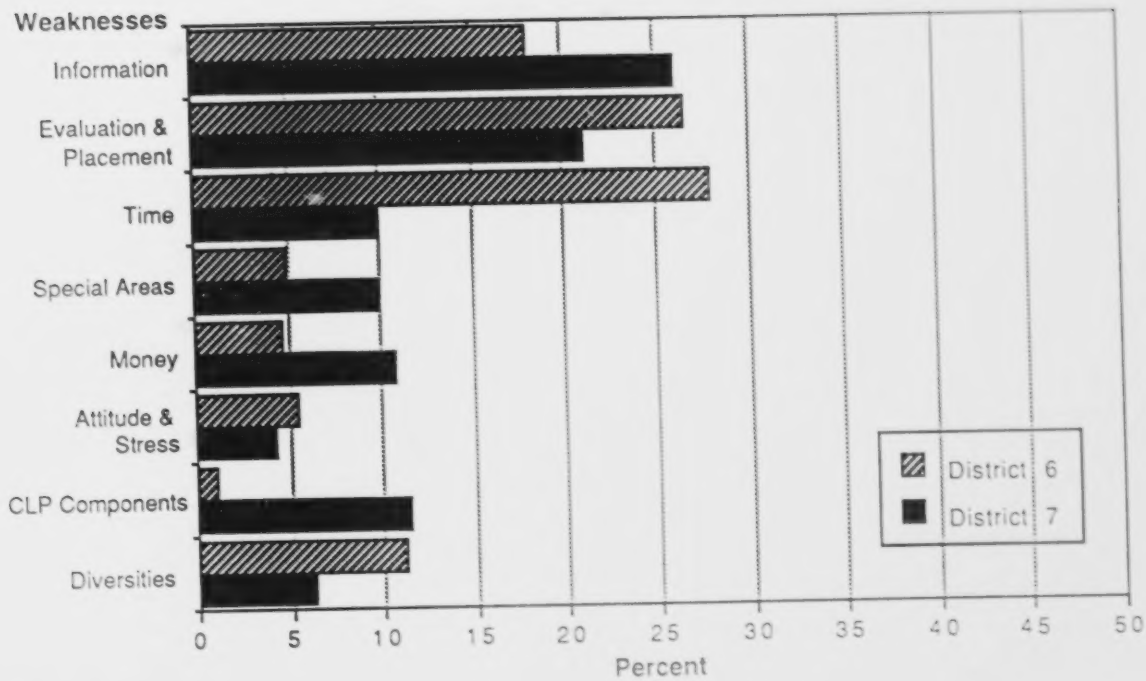


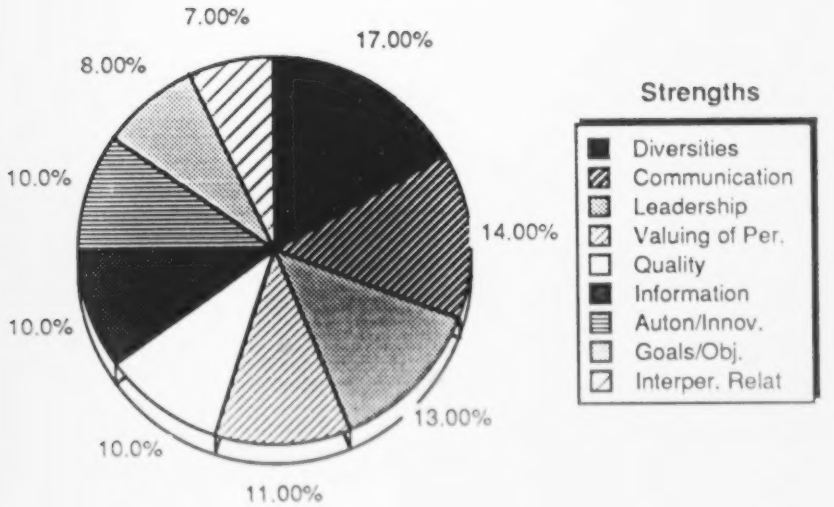


EXHIBIT B

FIGURE 3

Composite Percentage Distribution for District Teacher Perceptions of Strengths & Weaknesses in Organizational Climate

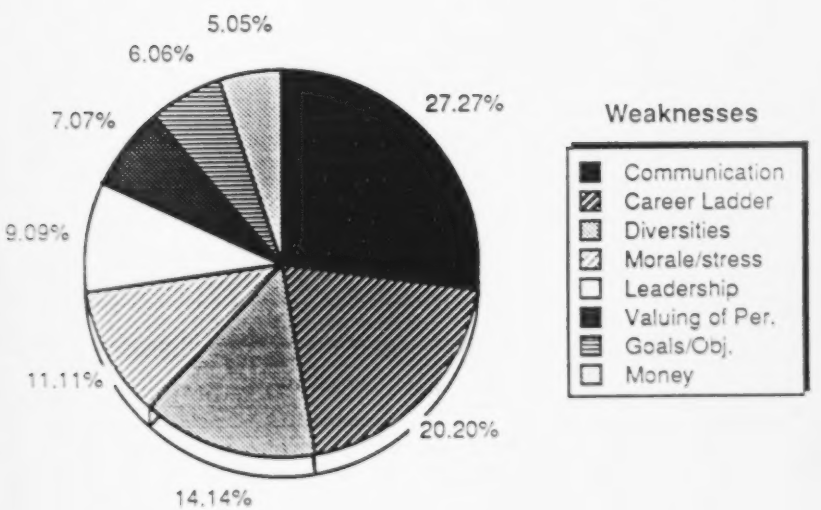
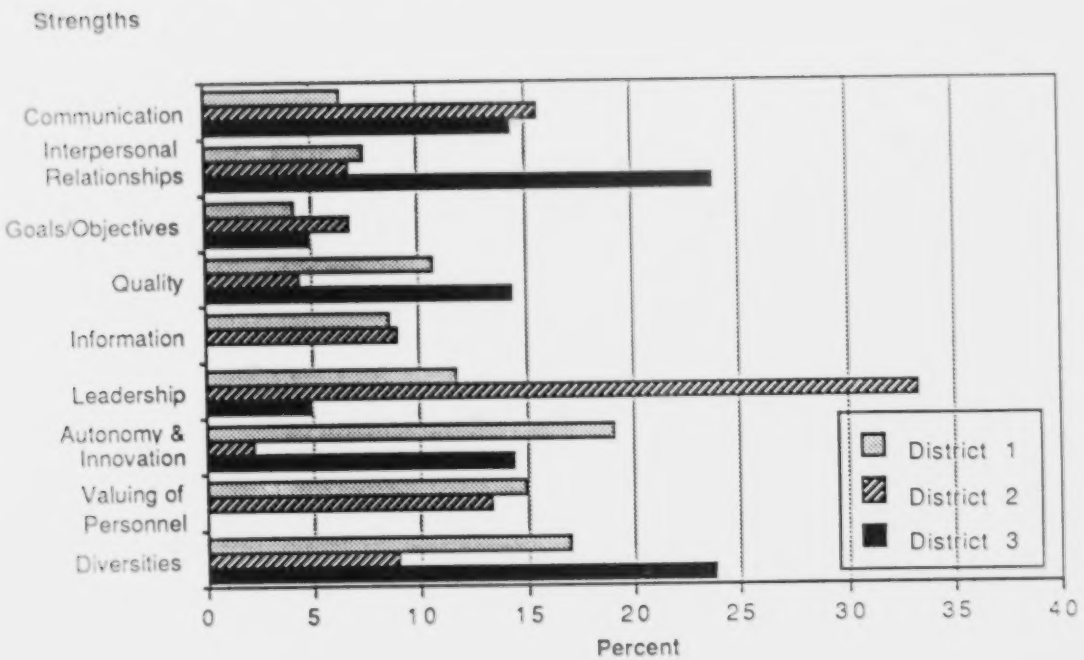


FIGURE 4

Composite Percentage Distribution of Teacher Perceptions of
Strengths & Weaknesses in Organizational Climate
by District



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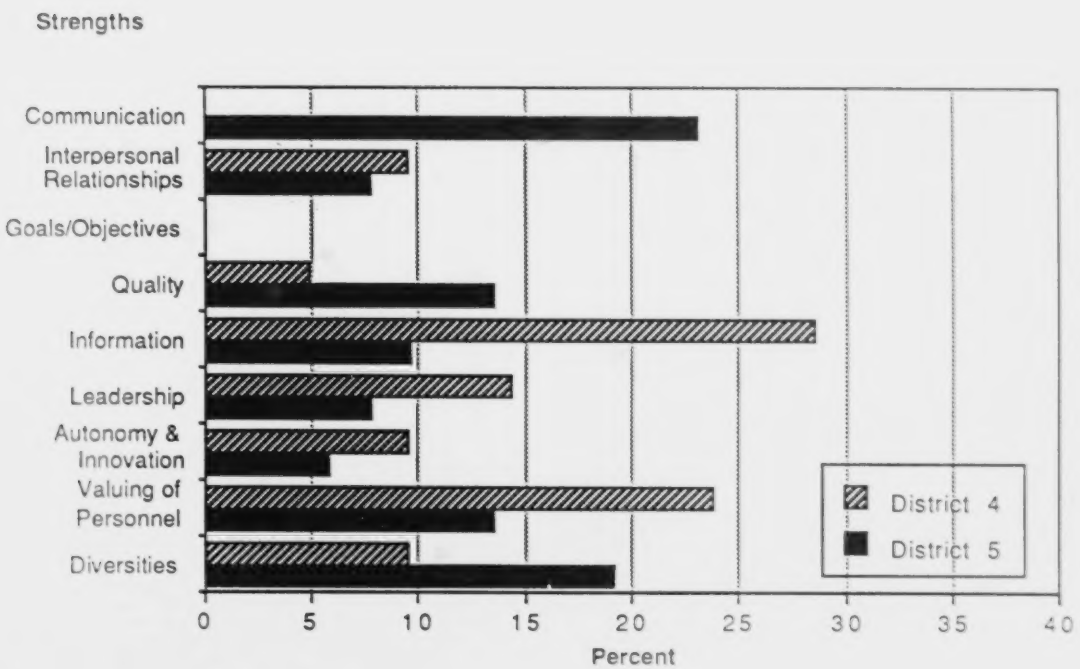

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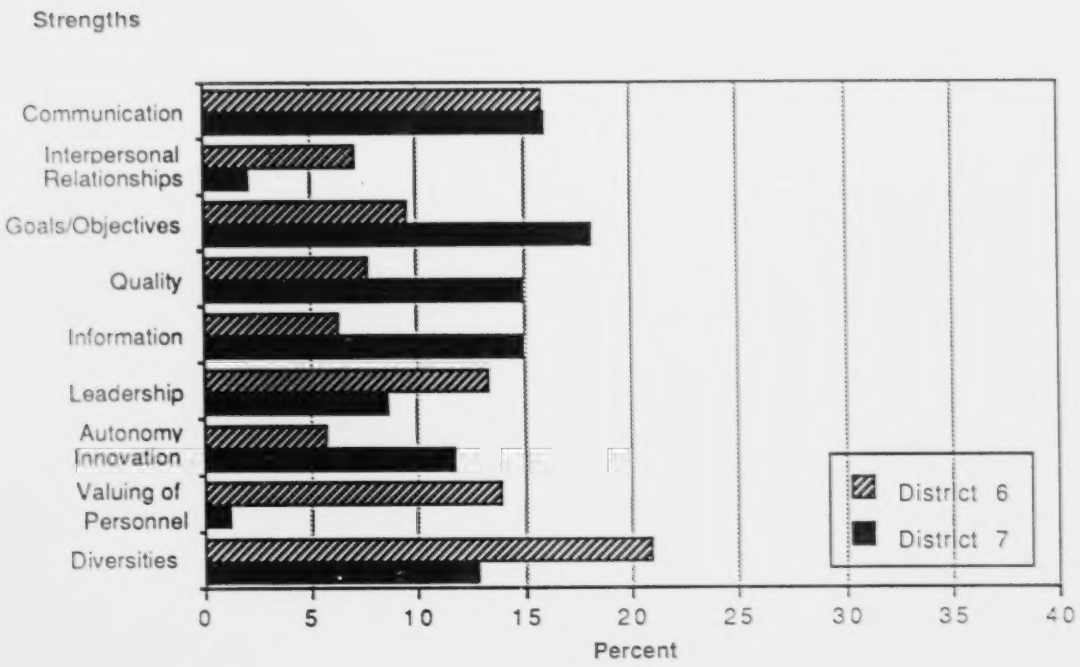

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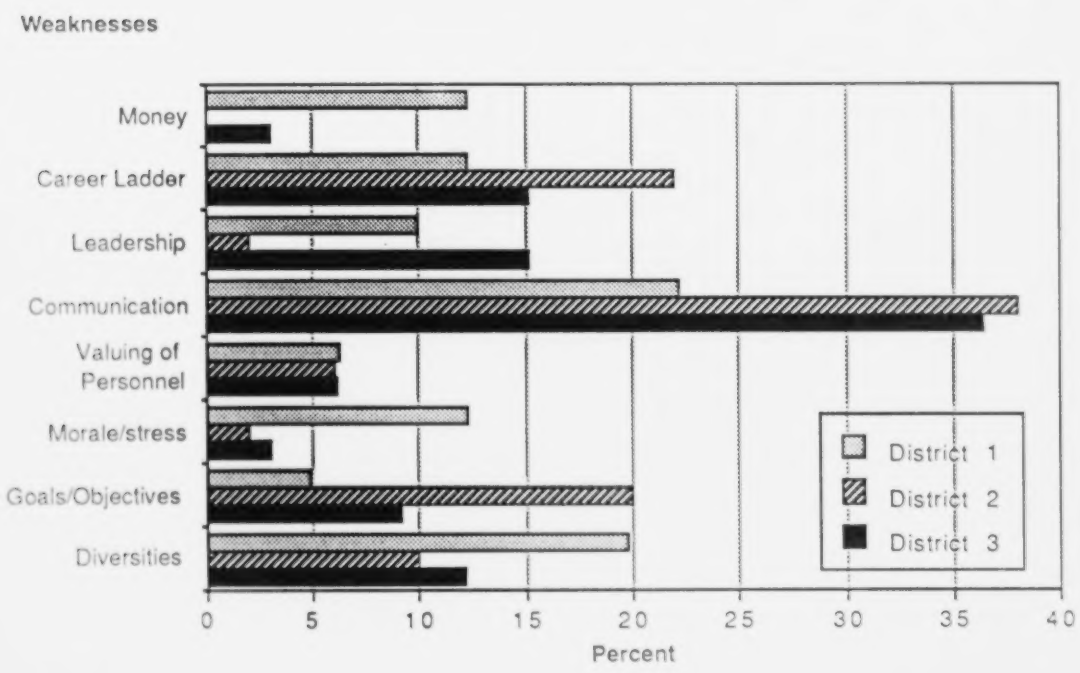

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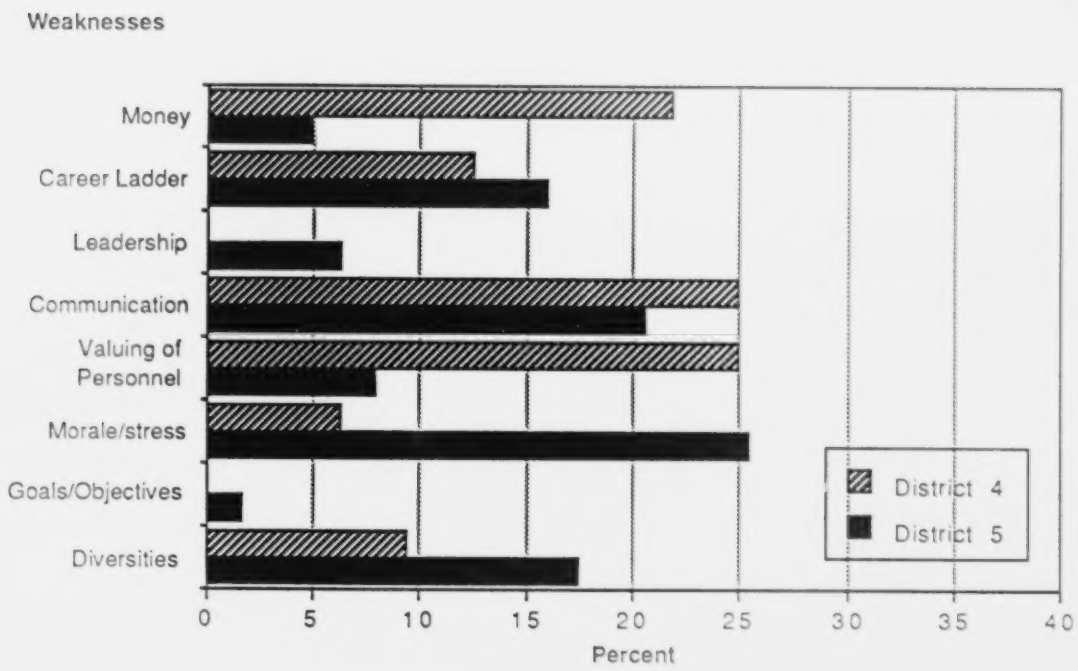

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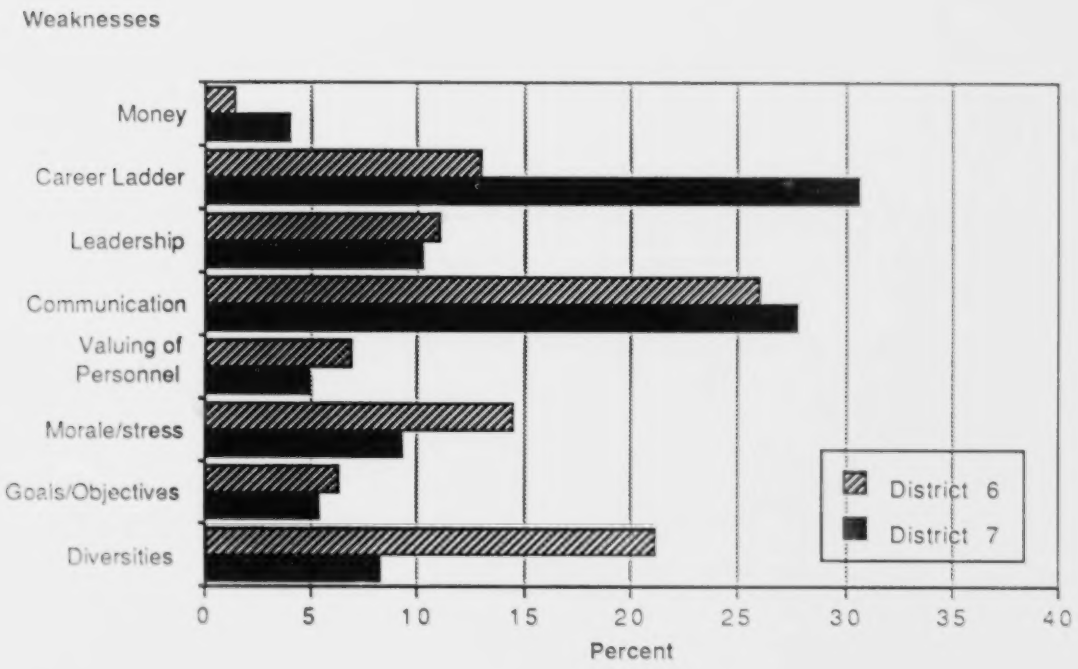


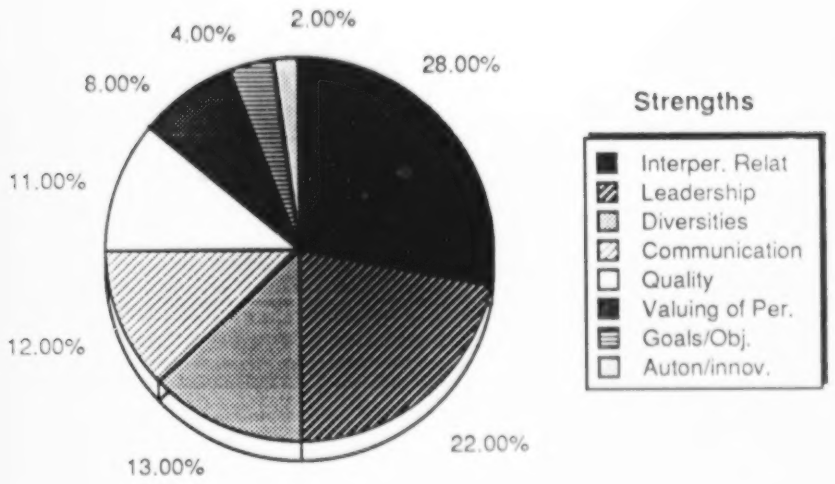


EXHIBIT C

FIGURE 5

Composite Percentage Distribution for School Unit Teacher Perceptions of Strengths & Weaknesses in Organizational Climate

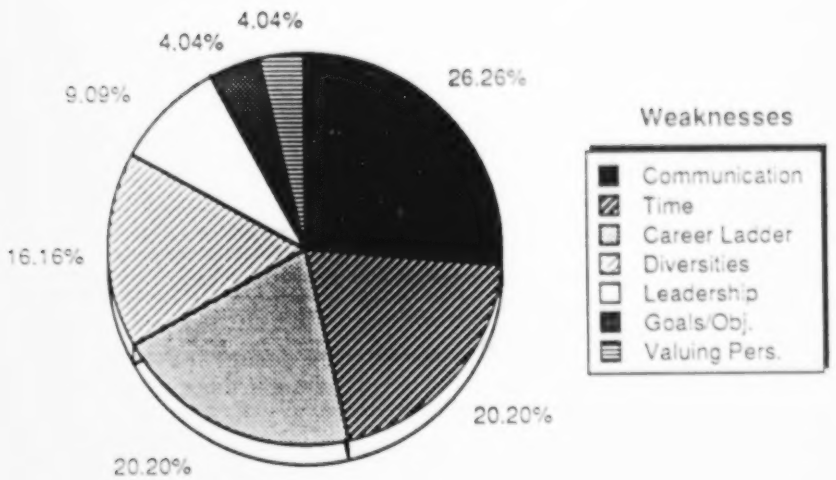
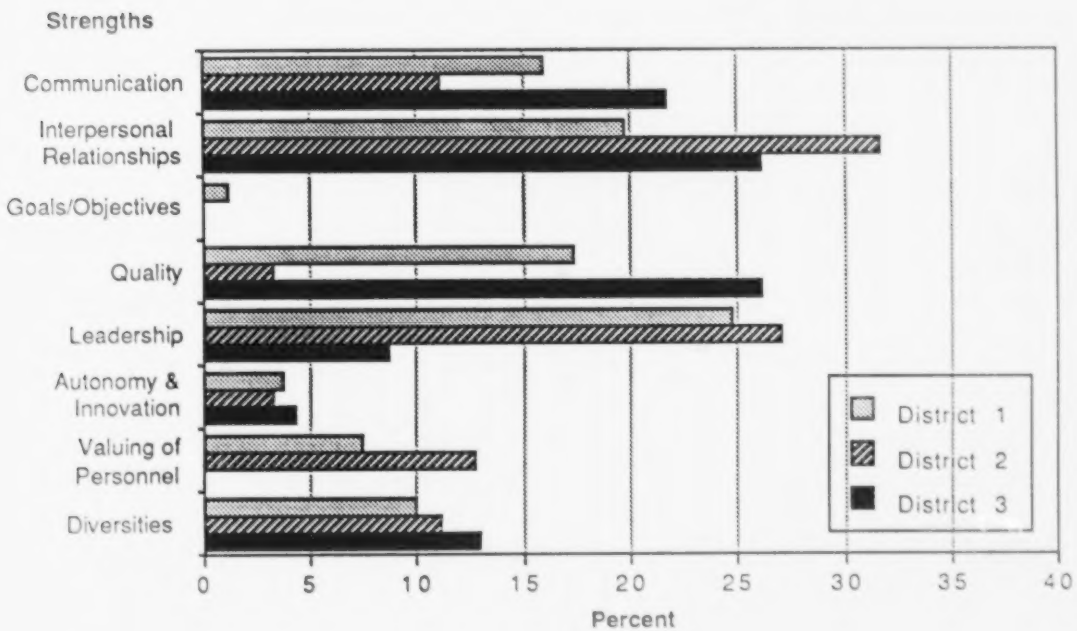


FIGURE 6

Composite Percentage Distribution of Teacher Perceptions of
Strengths & Weaknesses in Organizational Climate
by School Unit



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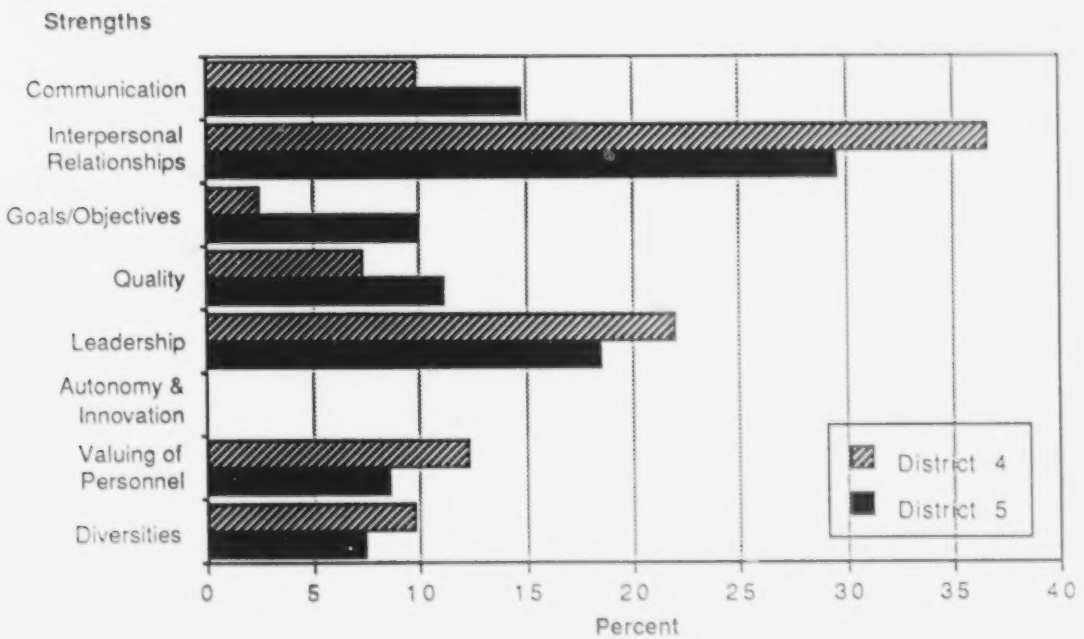

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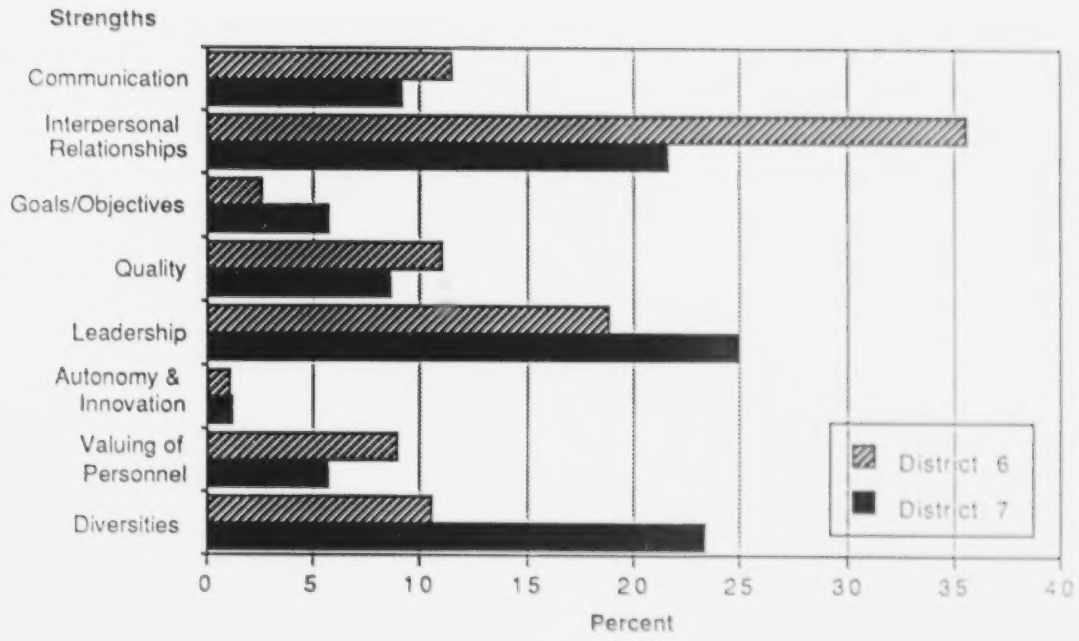

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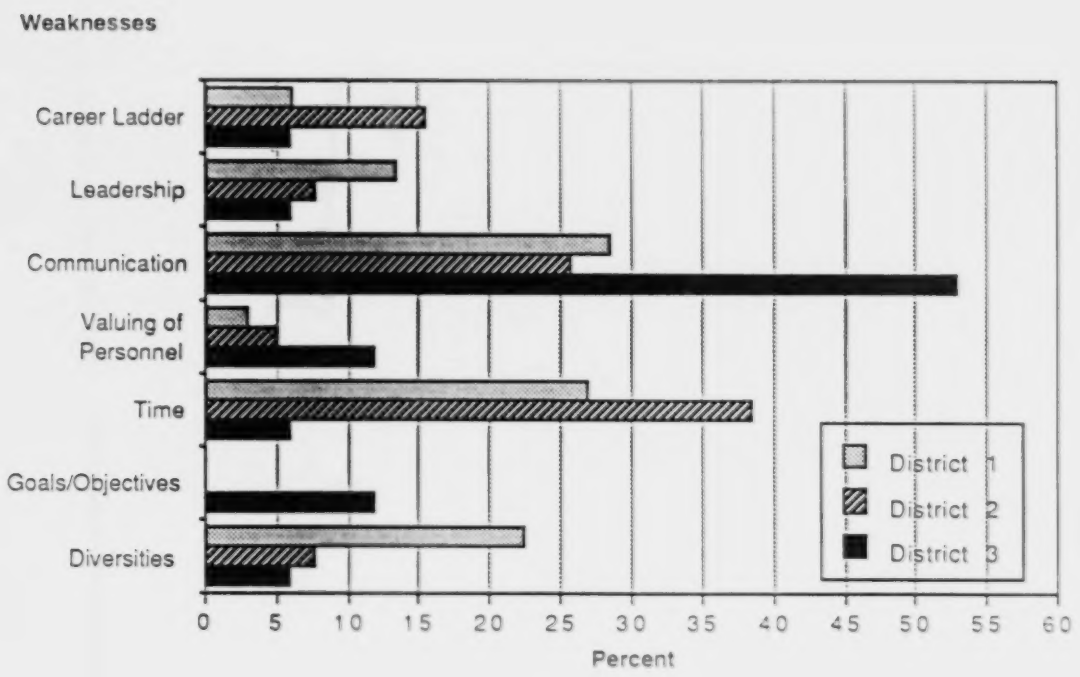

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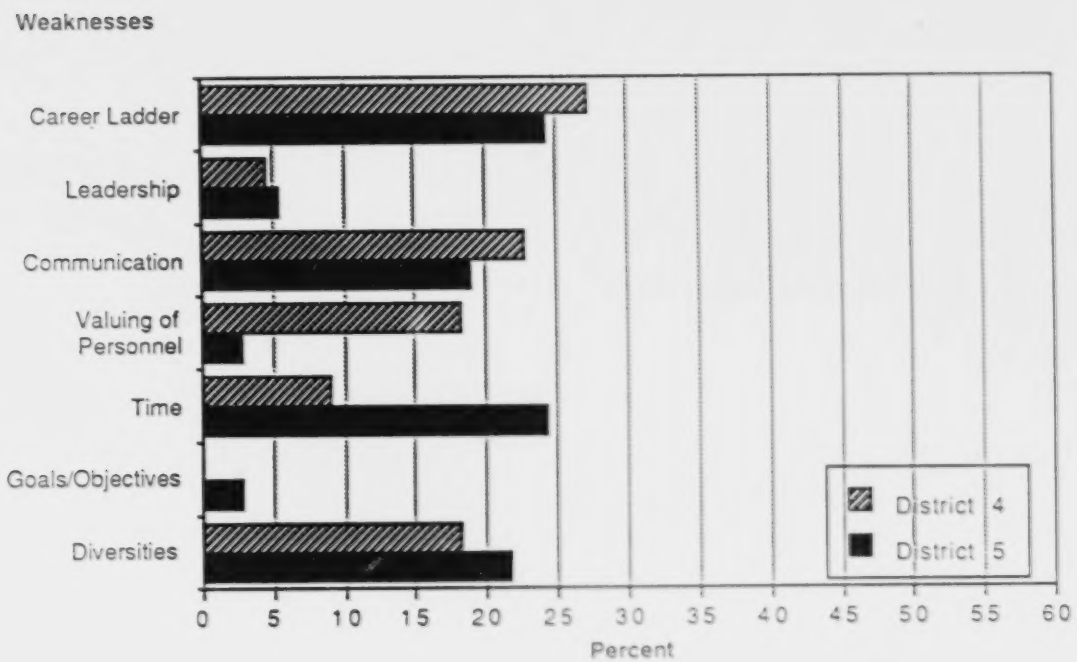

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